

all who knew Dr. Amyot and were familiar with his high qualifications rejoiced that he was made Deputy Minister. Under his supervision the department was organized, and the cooperation of provincial and local health authorities throughout Canada secured. His knowledge and ability have proved invaluable in helping to solve the health problems of the country. When in 1928 the Department of Soldiers Civil Re-establishment and the Department of Health were united under the name of the Department of Pensions and National Health, he was made Deputy Minister of the joint department.

When a year ago his health began to give way, Dr. Amyot was impelled to relinquish his duties, and he has now been retired from the Department. That he may yet be restored to vigour will be the wish of all who know him, coupled with the hope that years of enjoyable and useful leisure lie before him.

J. J. HEAGERTY

Professor J. B. Collip, F.R.S.

The *Journal* desires to offer its congratulations to Professor J. B. Collip, of McGill University, on his election to the high honour of Fellowship in the Royal Society of London, the blue ribbon of attainment for scientists.

Professor Collip graduated in 1911 at the University of Toronto, with special honours in physiology and biochemistry. Shortly after graduation he was appointed Lecturer in Biochemistry at the University of Alberta and was later promoted to full professorship. He holds the degrees of M.D., Ph.D., and D.Sc., and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He is now Professor of Biochemistry at McGill University, succeeding his teacher, Professor A. B. Macallum.

Coming first into the limelight for his work on the parathyroid glands and on insulin, Professor Collip has continued his work on hormones and the internal secretions, and within the last two or three years has discovered "emmenin" and the "A-P-L hormone", agents which apart from their theoretical interest already have proved their practical value in the treatment of disordered functions of the feminine reproductive system. Professor Collip is still a young man and his field is illimitable, so that we confidently look forward to other discoveries which will still further enhance his reputation. Already he stands in the forefront of the endocrinologists.

A.G.N.

The Prescription of Literature

How often is it the case that the busy doctor, after seeing his patient through a serious illness and setting his feet a short distance along the path of convalescence, drops the case and, if indeed he does not lose his interest, he at least

leaves the patient to his own devices. How much more likely is this to be true if the convalescence is protracted, or if the ailment is chronic and steadily, almost imperceptibly, progressing to its inevitable end. We need not blame him, for a doctor's life is strenuous these days, but we may well doubt if everything that is needful or possible has been done for the sufferer. Convalescence and protracted illness provide unique opportunities both for the patient and his doctor. The enforced seclusion and the respite from the calls of his daily vocation, the sudden stop in the machinery of everyday life, give the patient time for reflection, for mental, moral and religious stock-taking, for planning as to the future. He may react in different ways according to his temperament or his external circumstances. Thus he may be calm and peaceful, resigned, irritable and resentful, fearful, or merely bored. In such cases there is a problem for the psychologist, and there is no better psychologist for the occasion than the patient's own doctor. Drugs do not meet the indication, though the play of mind upon mind may do so. Pleasant and suitably directed conversation is of great value, and it is here, perhaps, that the "personality" of the doctor shines out in a specially attractive way. But this takes time, and time is valuable. What can take its place? Dr. Gerald B. Webb would answer— "The prescription of literature." For a delightful and stimulating half hour's reading we commend Doctor Webb's essay, which can be found in the *Transactions of the Association of American Physicians*, for 1930, page 13. The various points that arise are well put, and illustrated by amusing anecdotes and references to well known books and others that deserve to be well known. The idea is not new, but is revived by Doctor Webb in a charming way. Rabelais was, perhaps, the first physician to prescribe literature for his patients. On the title-page of his books, printed in Greek, were these words— "The property of Francis Rabelais and his friends." It is said that the romance of Gargantua and Pantagruel was written by him to divert and cheer his patients.

Books, like drugs, may be divided into several groups, as judged by their effects. They may be excitants, depressants, or soporifics; if they are very recent books they are apt to be irritants, rubefacients, and nauseants. Patients, too, differ. They have their likes and dislikes, their idiosyncrasies. The doctor, therefore, who would prescribe literature must be careful to recommend the book most suited to the case. He should not, for instance, suggest to the consumptive Mrs. Gaskell's "Bronte Family," or to a man with a glioma of the brain "The Life of Romanes." On the other hand biographies which depict the triumph of intellect and character over physical handicaps may prove stimu-